

IN THE CLAIMS

The following is a complete list of the claims now pending; this listing replaces all earlier versions and listings of the claims.

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1. (Currently Amended) A color-image processing apparatus comprising:
reading means for reading color image data stored in image storage
means provided in said color-image processing apparatus; and
determination means for comparing color-image data stored in
image storage means with a pattern stored in pattern storage means determining the
similarity between the color image data and a pattern of a specific image,
wherein the color-image data stored in said image storage means is
read with a predetermined timing, and determination by said determination means is
performed said determination means determines the similarity between the pattern of the
specific image and the color image data that is read at a predetermined time independent of
a read instruction given by a user to read the color image data stored in the image storage
means.

2. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1,
wherein said color-image processing apparatus comprises a computer, and wherein said
storage means comprises a hard disk.

3. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1,
wherein the color-image data is stored in said image storage means as a file.

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4. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, further comprising alteration means for performing alteration ~~for~~ of the color-image data when said determination means ~~has determined~~ determines that the color-image data coincides with the pattern.

5. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 2, wherein said ~~pattern image~~ image storage means, ~~said image storage means~~ and said determination means are controlled by an operating system on a computer, and wherein the operating system periodically controls said determination means to performs the perform determination ~~for~~ on the color-image data stored in said image storage means.

6. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein said ~~image storage means~~ stores color-image data corresponding to a plurality of images, and wherein, after determining the color-image data, said determination means records information indicating end of the determination in the determined color-image data adds determination-completed flag information to each piece of the color image data that has been subjected to determination.

7. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 6, wherein said determination means does not ~~perform determination for the color-image data where the information indicating the end of the determination has been recorded~~ determine the similarity with respect to the color image data having determination-completed flag information.

8. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim 5~~ claim 2, wherein application software operating in the operating system assigns color-image data stored in said image storage means, and wherein said determination means determines the color-image data when reading the color-image data the similarity when application software executed on a computer reads the color image data from said storage image means.

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the determination by said determination means is performed~~ performs a determination when an operation input of from an operator is not provided for a predetermined period.

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the determination by said determination means is performed~~ performs a determination when a CPU (central processing unit) of said color-image processing apparatus does not execute application software.

11. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the determination by said determination means is performed~~ performs a determination when ~~starting~~ said color-image processing apparatus is turned on.

12. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the determination by said determination means is performed~~ performs a

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determination when copying the color-image data from an external storage device to said image storage means.

13. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the determination by said determination means is performed~~ performs a determination when copying the color-image data from said image storage means to an external storage device.

14. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 1, wherein ~~the determination by said determination means is performed when~~ performs a determination during communication of the color-image data with an external apparatus connected to said color-image processing apparatus via a network.

15. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 3, wherein ~~the color-image data is stored in said image storage means as an image file, and~~ wherein said determination means performs a determination by obtaining bit-map data other than data buried within the image file in a format of a tag.

16. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 9, wherein, when another operation input ~~of~~ from the operator is not provided for a predetermined period after starting an operation input ~~of~~ from the operator, ~~determination processing by said determination means is resumed from~~ resumes determination processing for the color-image data for which a determination by said determination means is has not been performed.

17. (Currently Amended) An apparatus according to ~~Claim~~ claim 10, wherein, when the CPU of said color-image processing apparatus does not execute the application software after starting execution of the application software, ~~determination by~~ said determination means ~~is resumed from~~ resumes determination processing for the color-image data for which a determination by said determination means is has not been performed.

18. (Currently Amended) A ~~color-image processing control~~ method for comparing color-image data stored in image storage means with a pattern stored in pattern storage means for controlling a color processing apparatus, said method comprising the step steps of:

reading ~~the color-image~~ color image data stored in the an image storage means with a predetermined timing, and performing determination by the ~~determination means~~ medium provided in the color-image processing apparatus; and
determining the similarity between the color image data and a
pattern of a specific image,

wherein determining the similarity between the pattern of the
specific image and color image data that is read at a predetermined time independent of a
read instruction given by the user to read the color image data stored in the image storage
medium.

19. (Currently Amended) A ~~color-image processing apparatus~~, in which said ~~color-image processing control~~ method according to ~~Claim~~ claim 18, wherein the

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~~color-image processing apparatus comprises is executed by a computer, and said image storage means comprises a hard disk.~~

20. (Currently Amended) ~~A storage medium, capable of being read by a computer, computer program comprising:~~

~~code for reading color image data stored in an image storage medium provided in a color-image processing apparatus; and~~

~~codes of a determination process for comparing color-image data stored in image storage means with a pattern stored in pattern storage means
code for determining the similarity between an image subjected to determination and a pattern of a specific image,~~

~~wherein the color-image data stored in the image storage means is read at a predetermined timing, and determination in the determination process is performed determining the similarity between the pattern of the specific image and color image data that is read at a predetermined time independent of a read instruction given by a user to read the color image data stored in the image storage medium.~~

21. (Currently Amended) A storage medium according to ~~Claim~~ claim 20, wherein the image storage means comprises a hard disk.